

REMARKS

By the present amendment, new claim 12 has been added. Support for claim 12 is found in the original application, in particular on page 25, line 15.

Claims 1-12 are pending in the present application. Claim 1 is the only independent claim. Claims 1-3 and 10-11 are directed to a polarizing member, claims 4-7 are directed to an illuminator, and claims 8-9 are directed to a liquid-crystal display device.

In the Office Action, claims 1-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over US 6,543,153 to Weber et al. (Weber) in view of US 6,342,934 to Kameyama et al. (Kameyama). It is alleged in the Office Action that Weber teaches a linear polarizer with the transmittance properties recited in the claims and Kameyama discloses the combination of layers recited in the claims.

The rejection is respectfully traversed. It is submitted that Weber completely fails to teach or suggest that transmittance properties as recited in present claim 1 could be obtained for a polarizing member as recited in present claim 1. Specifically, referring to Fig. 32 of Weber as suggested in the Office Action, this Figure shows transmittance curves for the DBEF linear reflective polarizer alone. Thus, these transmittance values are not representative of a construction as recited in present claim 1. This is illustrated in Example 3 of the present specification, which shows that the transmittance properties of an optical element including DBEF and an absorptive polarizer are insufficient (see pages 25 and 27 of the present specification).

Further, the circular reflective polarizer of Kameyama is significantly different from the circularly polarized light separating sheet of the present invention. Specifically, Kameyama only discloses a reflective polarizer “formed in a plurality of layers, [in which] it is preferred that the respective layers are integrated in the close contact state by means of the adhesive layers” (col. 14,

lines 63-65). Thus, Kameyama clearly teaches that the circular reflective polarizer is made from respective layers separated by adhesive layers. As a result, the construction of Kameyama is similar to Example 2 of the present specification, which also shows insufficient transmittance properties (see pages 23-24 and 27 of the present specification).

In contrast, in the polarizing member of the presently claimed invention, the sheet-like member comprises a laminate of an absorptive type polarizer, a circularly polarized light separating sheet comprising cholesteric liquid-crystal layers in close and integral contact with one another, as recited in present claim 1. The “close and integral contact” is defined in the presently claimed invention, by reference to page 25, line 15 of the present specification, to mean “without interposition of any acrylic tacky layer”. Thus, the construction of the presently claimed invention is very different from the construction in Kameyama, and the resulting transmittance properties are accordingly very different from the constructions of Kameyama and Weber. In particular, an advantage of the presently claimed construction is that both frontal luminance and oblique view visibility can be improved, as explained and illustrated by Example 4 of the present specification. This feature of the presently claimed invention and its advantages are not taught or suggested in any of Weber or Kameyama, and therefore, the present claims are not obvious over the cited references taken alone or in any combination.

In addition, with respect to new claim 12, it is submitted that neither Weber nor Kameyama discloses using a cholesteric liquid-crystal layers of the circularly polarized light separating sheet are integrated into one body without interposition of adhesive layers. Therefore, for this reason alone, claim 12 is not obvious over the cited references taken alone or in any combination.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the rejection should be withdrawn.

In conclusion, the invention as presently claimed is patentable. It is believed that the claims are in allowable condition and a notice to that effect is earnestly requested.

In the event there is, in the Examiner's opinion, any outstanding issue and such issue may be resolved by means of a telephone interview, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

In the event this paper is not considered to be timely filed, the Applicants hereby petition for an appropriate extension of the response period. Please charge the fee for such extension and any other fees which may be required to our Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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